



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge Boardwalk and Hiking Trails

In the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area (East Entrance), there are over ten miles of hiking trails for visitors to enjoy. For your safety and the protection of the refuge, hiking is allowed only on marked trails and paved surfaces. Pets must be kept on a leash at all times, their waste picked up and disposed of properly, and are not allowed on the boardwalk. It is recommended that you carry water with you and apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent if needed. If you come across any vegetation blocking a trail, please report it to a refuge ranger or volunteer.

Swamp Walk Boardwalk

Length: 0.75 mile main boardwalk one way, two 0.2 mile one way extensions.

Look for alligators, lizards and song birds from this wooden boardwalk as it meanders through a scrub-shrub forest and marshes. Pond cypress and blackgum tower over loblolly bays, titi bush and hurrah bush. At the end of the boardwalk, visitors can climb a 45-foot tower to see spectacular views of the Chesser Prairie. The boardwalk is wheelchair accessible. *Boardwalk begins at parking lot on Swamp Island Drive.*

Upland Discovery Trail

Length: 0.2 mile loop

Walk through pines and palmettos to look for woodpeckers, warblers, and white-tailed deer. Trees marked with a white band indicate that they now or once served as nesting trees for the endangered Red-cockaded woodpecker. *Trail begins at Swamp Island Drive.*

Deerstand Trail

Length: 0.5 mile one way

Enjoy a stroll through pine uplands from the Chesser Island Homestead to the Chesser Prairie Boardwalk parking lot. A 25-foot high observation platform allows a view of an open field and scrub-shrub habitat— excellent for viewing songbirds and fox. *Begin at either the boardwalk parking lot or the Chesser Homestead Indian mound.*

Canal Diggers Trail

Length: 0.7 mile loop

In 1891, developers tried to drain the Okefenokee by building a canal to the St. Mary's River. Follow the remnants of the canal through pine uplands and cypress wetlands. Look for signs of Gopher tortoises and woodpeckers on this gently sloping up and down trail. *Trail begins at the east edge of the picnic area or from Swamp Island Drive.*

Homestead Trail

Length: 0.7 mile one way

This trail loops around the historic Chesser Homestead, built on an oak hammock. Imagine yourself as a swamper of the 1920's, heading through these woods of oak, palmetto and Spanish moss. *Begin at the Chesser Homestead garden. At end of trail, follow the Ridley Trail a short distance back to the homestead.*

Cane Pole Trail

Length: Two sections, 0.28 mile one way

Walk along the edge of the Suwannee Canal into the Okefenokee Swamp. This path has two options: go over the bridge to the island and look for Great blue herons, turtles and alligators or follow the edge of the canal through scrub-shrub and cypress. Listen for Sandhill cranes and Red-shouldered hawks in the prairie beyond the trail. *Trail begins behind the Okefenokee Adventures boat yard.*

Ridley Island Trail

Length: 1.75 miles one way

For more adventurous walkers, this trail meanders through wet cypress stands and drier upland pine forests of Ridley's Island. Signs of Black bear are often evident, and pitcher plants thrive along the wet areas of the trail. Wear sturdy shoes or boots; this trail can be wet at times. *Begin at either the Ridley Island Trail parking lot on Swamp Island Drive or from the Chesser Homestead corncrib.*

Phernetton Trail

Length: 1.3 miles loop

Look for clusters of Fox squirrel nests in trees above you. This trail is excellent for viewing wildlife at night when the refuge is closed. *Access to trail is off of entrance road near Highway 121/23.*

Longleaf Pine Trail

Length: 4.0 miles one way

The longest trail in the refuge, it winds back and forth across the refuge entrance road through longleaf pine/wiregrass communities being restored by refuge staff. The trees you see marked with a white band now or once served as nesting trees for the endangered Red-cockaded woodpecker. Listen for frogs and birds that make their home in the wetlands along the trail's edge. Wear sturdy shoes or boots; this trail can be wet at times. *Access to trail is from the Canal Diggers Trail and numerous points along the entrance road.*